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PRESS RELEASE

U.S. GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES NEW PROGRAM TO SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

DHAKA, OCTOBER 7 -- The U.S. Government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has announced the launch of a new program to promote the rights of people with disabilities in Bangladesh. *Handicap International* will implement a two-year, \$300,000 program entitled “Organizational Capacity Building to Advocate for the People with Disabilities in Bangladesh.” *Handicap International* will work with disabled peoples’ organizations in each division in Bangladesh to enhance their capacity for rights-based advocacy. The program will strengthen networks for protecting and advancing the rights of thousands of people with disabilities. It will provide strategic planning, financial management, advocacy, and networking training to organizations that protect and advance the rights of people with disabilities. The program will partner with the Government of Bangladesh to highlight this important issue and improve government policies and action plans in this area.

The United States is an international leader in the area of disability and inclusive development. In recent years, the U.S. Government, through USAID, has significantly expanded its programs in more than 30 countries with a strong emphasis on raising the awareness of governments and communities about the rights of people with disabilities. On July 30, the U.S. Government signed the U.N. Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities.

The U.S. Government, through USAID, is working to improve the lives of the people of Bangladesh, especially the very poor. USAID administers programs in Bangladesh in five broad areas: improving health and pre-primary education, creating income opportunities for rural poor, supporting good governance, enhancing food security, and strengthening disaster preparedness and providing emergency assistance following natural disasters. The U.S. Government has provided more than \$5 billion in assistance to Bangladesh since 1971. In 2009, USAID’s planned assistance will total about \$172 million.

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GR/ 2009

Note: A Bangla translation of this press release is also available at the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section, Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)